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Notable Paintings, Sculptures, and Works on Paper, Including Renowned Evelyn Stefansson Nef Collection and Mosaic by Chagall, Are Among Recent Acquisitions by National Gallery of Art



Marc Chagall
Untitled, 1971
Stone and glass mosaic
National Gallery of Art, The Nef Collection
Photographed in the garden of Evelyn Nef, 2010, by Rob Shelley

The National Gallery of Art has received an extraordinary bequest of 19th- and 20th-century prints, drawings, and illustrated books by artists ranging from Edouard Vuillard to Alex Katz from the late Evelyn Nef, who passed away in December 2009. The gift from the collection she built with her late husband John Nef is composed of 31 drawings, 46 prints, 25 volumes, and a monumental mosaic.

In addition to the Nef bequest, a number of significant works of art have recently entered the Gallery's collection. They include paintings by Pieter Soutman, Adam van Breen, Gilbert Stuart, and William Stanley Haseltine; a sculpture by Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse and a large medallion by Jean-Baptiste Daniel-Dupuis; contemporary works by Nancy Graves, James Rosenquist, Nam June Paik, and Sean Scully; an exceptional

18th-century map of Venice; a volume of prints by Ludwig Schongauer; and photographs by Alfred Stieglitz, Jacques-Henri Lartigue, Charles Nègre, Linnaeus Tripe, Bill Brandt, and Alvin Langdon Coburn.

"We are extremely grateful to the donors who made these outstanding acquisitions possible," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "We honor Evelyn Nef, a constant friend of the Gallery for more than 40 years, whose many contributions have left a lasting legacy."

Evelyn Nef Bequest

Dynamic, brilliant, and vivacious, Evelyn Stefansson Nef (1913–2009) was a psychotherapist, author, and benefactor to some of Washington's leading cultural institutions. In addition to direct gifts of art, her annual donations of funds to the Gallery supported many programs and activities, and made possible the acquisition of a dozen important French pastels, watercolors, drawings, and prints. Her personal *joie de vivre* was reflected by her delight in works by artists from the School of Paris, especially Pablo Picasso and Marc Chagall.

Evelyn Nef's bequest to the Gallery has now brought a financial endowment and more than 100 drawings and prints by Raoul Dufy, Wassily Kandinsky, Alex Katz, Le Corbusier, Fernand Léger, Auguste Renoir, Georges Rouault, Edouard Vuillard, James McNeill Whistler, and others. Also included are a number of works by Picasso and two dozen drawings and watercolors by Chagall—many in books personally dedicated by the artist to Evelyn and her late husband John Nef.

Chagall Mosaic

The most famous work in the Nef bequest is *Untitled* (1970) by Marc Chagall (1887–1985). It was designed by the artist to adorn the garden of the Nefs' Georgetown residence. A close friend of the Nefs, Chagall claimed he was "discovered" by John. The artist visited the Nefs in 1968 and declared, "Nothing for the house. The house is perfect as it is. But I will do something for the garden. A mosaic."

Executed by Italian artist Lino Melano using only Murano glass and natural colored stones from Carrara, Italy, the mosaic is composed of 10 individually fashioned mosaic

panels, each approximately 5 x 3 ½ feet and mounted to a concrete back panel, which was installed into a brick and concrete wall in the Nef garden. It depicts figures from Greek mythology—Orpheus with his lute, the Three Graces, and the winged horse Pegasus. On the lower left, Chagall, a Jew who found refuge in New York during World War II, included a personal homage to the United States with a scene of immigrants crossing the ocean to a new life in America. On the lower right, the artist also included a pair of lovers beneath a tree. When Evelyn inquired if the couple was intended to depict her and John, Chagall replied, "If you like."

The mosaic has provided enjoyment to many people through the years after it was installed in 1971, including visitors to the Nef household as well as Washingtonians peering over the garden wall from the public sidewalk. Currently awaiting necessary conservation treatment by the Gallery's department of object conservation with a mosaic specialist, the Chagall mosaic is expected to find its new home in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden in 2012.

Picasso Works on Paper

The bequest includes 18 works by Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), who was also favored by the Nefs. Perhaps the finest example is the neoclassical drawing *Young Woman Seated in an Armchair*, 1921–1922. Set against a pale blue wash, the young woman's robust body is sketched in a loose shift. She is seated in an overstuffed armchair like a classical goddess in a thoroughly modern interior. The scholar William Rubin has identified this drawing as the earliest image documenting Picasso's acquaintance with the stunning Sara Murphy, who with her husband, the artist Gerald Murphy, was among the most elegant and fashionable American expatriates during the early 1920s. The freshness of this drawing reflects Picasso's first vision, and yet his style gives the figure the monumentality of a full-scale painting.

A complete set of Picasso's 14 early *Saltimbanques* etchings and drypoints is included in the Nef bequest. These works complement the Gallery's masterpiece by the artist, *Family of Saltimbanques* (1905), which is currently on view in the West Building in the exhibition *From Impressionism to Modernism: The Chester Dale Collection*.

Other Acquisitions

Northern Baroque Paintings

The department of Northern Baroque Paintings added two handsome works to the Dutch and Flemish collections through the generosity of private donors. The most recent of these is the masterfully rendered painting by artist Pieter Soutman (c. 1580–1657), entitled *Young Man Holding a Staff*. This recently discovered head study, which Soutman painted in 1640, was purchased with The Derald H. Ruttenberg Memorial Fund. Also acquired was the charming ice scene *Skating on the Frozen Amstel River* by Dutch artist Adam van Breen (c. 1585–1640). Donated to the National Gallery through The Lee and Juliet Folger Fund, this lively winter scene depicts the joy of skating and outdoor life in the Netherlands in the early 17th century. It is a welcome addition to the Dutch Cabinet Galleries. Both works are currently on view in the Dutch and Flemish Galleries.

American Paintings

One of the most important paintings by Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828)—a striking 1794 portrait of John Jay, first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court—has entered the Gallery's collection as a partial and promised gift of the Jay family and is now on view in the American galleries. A model of judicial intellect and rectitude, Jay is shown in the academic robe he received when he was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree by Harvard College. Following a commission from Jay, it was painted in New York during a brief two-year period when Stuart completed at least eight of the portraits of America's political, social, and business elite already in the Gallery's collection. It was also Jay whose letter of introduction led to an invitation to paint the man who would be Stuart's most renowned subject—George Washington.

Also on view in the West Building's American galleries is another new acquisition by William Stanley Haseltine (1835–1900), whose geologically precise views of New England's rocky coast brought him his earliest acclaim. A gift of Alexander M. and Judith W. Laughlin, the splendid—and previously unknown—*Narragansett Bay* (1864) is in pristine condition, complete with its original stretcher. The Gallery received one of Haseltine's earliest oil studies, *Marina Piccola, Capri* (c. 1858), from the artist's daughter in 1953 and the stunning *Natural Arch at Capri* (1871) from Guest Services Corporation in 1991. This new acquisition adds one of his celebrated American "rock

portraits" to the collection.

Sculpture

Two 19th-century French sculptures were acquired: Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse's terra-cotta *Fantasy Bust of a Veiled Woman* (c. 1865–1870) and a *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Medallion* (1892–1893) by Jean-Baptiste Daniel-Dupuis.

This previously unrecorded *Fantasy Bust of a Veiled Woman* by Carrier-Belleuse (1824–1887) is the best of three mold-made examples of the same composition. Carrier-Belleuse employed Auguste Rodin at various junctures, and the similarity between this terra-cotta and the Gallery's *Bust of a Woman* (1875) by Rodin is striking. Purchased with funds from the New Century Fund, the *Fantasy Bust* balances recently acquired of academic 19th-century marble sculptures by Randolph Rogers, Pietro Magni, and Thomas Crawford, providing an important chronological bridge between these artists and Rodin. It will be displayed in the Ground Floor Sculpture Galleries in September.

The design of the *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts Medallion* was commissioned by the Academy in 1892 to award to American artists who merited great honor. The prolific Daniel-Dupuis (1849–1899), whose work is not yet represented in the Gallery's extensive collection of medals and plaquettes, engraved the dies of the smaller gold medal in Paris. This grandly scaled, cast medallion is also linked to the Gallery's renowned collection of sculptures by Rodin: the plaster *Age of Bronze* by Rodin, which entered the Gallery's collection in 1991, was originally ordered by the Academy in 1898. The acquisition of the medallion was made possible by Mark and Lynne Hammerschlag. It will also go on view before year-end in the Ground Floor Sculpture Galleries.

Modern and Contemporary Art

Nancy Graves' *Agualine* (1980) and James Rosenquist's *Spectator—Speed of Light* (2001) were both generously donated by Robert E. Meyerhoff and will be added to the growing Collection of Robert and Jane Meyerhoff at the Gallery, on view in the East Building.

Aqualine is the first painting by Graves (1940–1995) to enter the collection. The canvas' high-key colors and expressive linear gestures mark a departure from her more controlled paintings of the late 1970s and seem to signal her later sculpture, such as the Gallery's *Spinner* (1985). The title, an invented adjective including the Spanish word for water, underscores the fluidity of the composition.

An energetic late painting by Rosenquist (b. 1933), *Spectator—Speed of Light* is the second to enter the collection after the 2008 purchase of *White Bread* (1964). The newly acquired work is part of a series inspired by Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity, in which Rosenquist explores the disjointed perceptions of artist and viewer, as well as the ambiguous distinction between figuration and abstraction.

The Hakuta family donated *Untitled (Red Hand)* (1967) by Nam June Paik (1932–2006) after the Collectors Committee purchased Paik's *Ommah* (2005) in March. The work features a blinking light bulb that flashes through an antique Japanese scroll painting to illuminate a handprint made on the glass of the frame. Paik offers a humorous meditation on authorship and scavenger hunting, technology and tradition. This important early work captures both the artist's wit and his deep interest in the intersection of traditional and modern cultures.

Generously donated by William Zachs, *All There Is* (1986) by Sean Scully (b. 1945) is the third and earliest painting by the artist to enter the collection. Characteristic of his paintings from the 1980s, it confronts the viewer with its weighty, highly physical presence. With this work, Scully breaks away from the rigid geometry of his earlier work while still keeping to his characteristic vocabulary of stripes. The painting is on display in the installation *American Paintings, 1959–2009* on the Upper Level of the East Building.

Prints and Drawings

The Ahmanson Foundation has enabled the Gallery to acquire one of the greatest printed maps of cities in terms of art and of science: a first edition of *Iconografica Rappresentazione della Inclita Città di Venezia* (Venice, Giuseppe Baroni, 1729). This map combined the talents of the leading Venetian figure painter in the decade, Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), and the leading Venetian printmaker in the 1720s and

early 1730s, Giovanni Antonio Faldoni (c. 1690–c. 1770). Francesco Zucchi (1692–1764) contributed the views (mostly after Luca Carlevaris). Using groundbreaking surveying tools and mathematics of the day, Lodovico Ughi (active 1710–1730) prepared precise measurements of buildings, streets, canals, and gardens, making this map authoritative for more than a century. It will be on view in the East Building as part of the exhibition *Venice: Canaletto and His Rivals* (February 20–May 30, 2011).

Continuing its acquisitions focused on major artistic series of woodcuts, the Gallery has acquired *Gaistliche usslegong des lebes Jhesu Cristi* illustrated by Ludwig Schongauer (c. 1450–1494) and other artists, made possible by the Paul Mellon Fund. Published in Ulm, Germany, circa 1482 by Johann Zainer, this volume contains one of the most beautiful and important series of woodcuts before Dürer's *Apocalypse*. Ludwig Schongauer, the brother of Martin Schongauer, the greatest engraver of the period, designed 35 of the 95 cuts included here. An unnamed second major artist designed 39 woodcuts for this book, showing broader, more substantial figures in an open style that evokes the simple but intense religious images of the romanesque.

The Department of Modern Prints and Drawings recently enriched its collection of works by the American artist John Taylor Arms (1887–1953). With astonishing dexterity and an eye for minute detail, Arms created prints of monumental presence despite their modest scale. *Towers of San Gimignano* (1932), is one of five works given to the National Gallery by David F. Wright in addition to four others promised by him, and underscores Arms' keen interest in medieval buildings and his attentiveness to patterns of light and dark stonework. The masterly rendered *West Forty-Second Street Night* (1922), purchased with funds from Donald and the late Nancy de Laski, captures the artist's fascination with the atmosphere and rhythm of New York City. Both prints will be on view as part of the exhibition *The Gothic Spirit of John Taylor Arms*, opening May 15, 2011.

Photographs

The department of photographs has acquired a number of works, including Alfred Stieglitz's *Sherwood Anderson* (1923), Jacques-Henri Lartigue's *Bouboutte, Rouzat* (1908), Charles Nègres' *Chartres Cathedral, Royal Portal* (1855–1857), Linnaeus Tripe's *Namkal Drug* (1858–1860), Bill Brandt's *Bloomsbury* (1940–1941), and Alvin

Langdon Coburn's *New York* (1910).

In 1923 Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946) photographed the author Sherwood Anderson, posed in front of Georgia O'Keeffe's painting *Lake George with Crows* (1921), for inclusion in Paul Rosenfeld's forthcoming book *Port of New York* (1924). This vintage print of that portrait adds to the collection an important photograph, which Stieglitz had intended to include in the "Key Set" of photographs that was donated by Georgia O'Keeffe to the National Gallery in 1949. It was purchased with funds from the Pepita Milmore Memorial Fund.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue (1894–1986) made exuberant photographs, such as *Bouboutte, Rouzat*, that depict his family and friends pursuing the pastimes of an affluent and active family at the dawn of the 20th century. The first work by Lartigue to enter the collection, this extremely rare vintage print captures the artist's cousin leaping off a wall and expresses both the youthful zeal of its author and the young century's fascination with instantaneity, movement, and speed. Its purchase was made possible by the Vital Projects Fund.

One of the most influential 19th-century photographers, Charles Nègre (1820–1880) was also one of the early champions of photogravure. In 1855, Nègre was commissioned by the French government to produce a series of photogravures from his photographs of Chartres Cathedral, then under restoration by the architect Jean-Baptiste Lassus. Nègre employed an extremely large negative to create this spacious, luminous, and richly detailed photogravure of the cathedral's Royal Portal. It was acquired through the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund.

An early pioneer of photography, Linnaeus Tripe (1822–1902) made striking photographs of India and Burma during the 1850s while working for the British government and published them in a series of portfolios called *Photographic Views*, including this photograph of a "drug" or fort, *Namkal Drug*, acquired through the generosity of Edward J. Lenkin and Roselin Atzwanger and the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund. Made from a paper negative that Tripe skillfully retouched, this subtly textured print reveals how he combined technical expertise with an eloquent artistic sensibility, creating beautiful, historic documents.

In the 1930s, Bill Brandt (1904–1983) established a career in London as a photojournalist in the emerging market of pictorial magazines. During the London blitz in World War II, Brandt made several photographs of the blacked-out city. Taken by moonlight, as the unlit street lamp suggests, *Bloomsbury* captures the stark contrast of the buildings, reduced to dark, flat silhouettes, against the glow of moonlight from the pavement. Its purchase was made possible by the Diana and Mallory Walker Fund.

Mastering the complicated technique of photogravure, Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882–1966) published two portfolios, *London* (1909) and *New York* (1910), and printed the photogravures on his own printing press in London. Acquired through the Alfred H. Moses and Fern M. Schad Fund, this important volume *New York* consists of 20 prints, exploiting the soft quality of the photogravure while simultaneously capturing the energy of the new city under construction and its muscular, geometric beauty.

Study Rooms

Works on paper not on display may be viewed and studied by appointment in the Gallery's Print Study Rooms or Photograph Study Room by qualified scholars and students in accordance with the Gallery's rules and requirements. Single visitors as well as small groups are welcome.

The Study Rooms are open Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to noon and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., except federal holidays.

To make an appointment to view prints or drawings, please telephone (202) 842-6380. To make an appointment to view photographs, please e-mail photographs@nga.gov or telephone (202) 842-6144. Appointments should be made at least two weeks in advance.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ngadc) at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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